

综述

β -地中海贫血治疗新方法概述

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摘要: 血红蛋白病是全球范围内最常见的单基因遗传病之一, 约有1%~5%的全球人口携带地中海贫血的突变基因。地中海贫血可根据输血需求分为输血依赖型地中海贫血和非输血依赖型地中海贫血。传统的治疗方式包括输血、脾切除手术、羟基脲疗法和铁螯合疗法等, 它们目前被广泛应用于临床治疗, 并构成了 β -地中海贫血治疗指南所推荐的主要方法。然而, 这些方法的应用存在着多种障碍和限制, 因此迫切需要探索新的治疗方法。随着对 β -地中海贫血的病理生理学过程的研究, 人们对该疾病的发病机制有了更深入的了解。现已证明, 地中海贫血的发病与无效红细胞生成(ineffective erythropoiesis, IE)、 α/β -珠蛋白链比例失衡和铁过载等密切相关。针对不同的发病机制, 新的治疗方法不断涌现。其中, 治疗IE的新药物主要包括活化素受体II陷阱配体、Janus激酶2抑制剂、丙酮酸激酶活化剂和甘氨酸转运蛋白1抑制剂等; 纠正血红蛋白链不平衡的新技术主要有骨髓移植术和基因编辑等; 降低铁过载方面的措施则与抑制转铁蛋白和铁调素等的活性相关。这些新方法和新药物为 β -地中海贫血的治疗和管理提供了新的思路 and 选择。

关键词: β -地中海贫血; 珠蛋白链失衡; 铁过载; 无效红细胞生成

Overview of new approaches to β -thalassemia treatment

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Abstract: Hemoglobinopathies are one of the most common single-gene genetic disorders globally, with approximately 1% to 5% of the global population carrying the mutated gene for thalassemia. Thalassemia are classified into transfusion-dependent thalassemia and non-transfusion-dependent thalassemia based on the need for blood transfusion. Traditional treatment modalities include blood transfusion, splenectomy, hydroxyurea therapy, and iron chelation therapy, which are now widely used for clinical treatment and constitute the main methods recommended in the β -thalassemia treatment guidelines. However, there are multiple barriers and limitations to the application of these approaches, and there is an urgent need to explore new therapeutic approaches. With the in-depth study of the pathophysiological process of β -thalassemia, a deeper understanding of the pathogenesis of the disease has been gained. It has been demonstrated that the pathogenesis of thalassemia is closely related to ineffective erythropoiesis (IE), imbalance in the ratio of α/β -globin protein chains and iron overload. New therapeutic approaches are emerging for different pathogenic mechanisms. Among them, new drugs for the treatment of IE mainly include activin receptor II trap ligands, Janus kinase 2 inhibitors, pyruvate kinase activators, and glycine transporter protein 1 inhibitors. Correcting the imbalance in the hemoglobin chain is mainly due to emerging technologies such as bone marrow transplantation and gene editing. Measures in reducing iron overload are associated with inhibiting the activity of transferrin and hepcidin. These new approaches provide new ideas and options for the treatment and management of β -thalassemia.

Key words: β -thalassemia; globin chain imbalance; iron overload; ineffective erythropoiesis

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历史上, β -地中海贫血在地中海地区极为普遍, 中东和印度次之。然而, 由于全球范围内的人口迁徙和社会发展的全球化趋势, 该疾病在世界范围内变得越来越常见, 现在已成为了医疗卫生系统日益关注的疾病之一^[1]。

目前, β -地中海贫血的常规治疗方法, 如输血、脾切除术、羟基脲疗法和铁螯合疗法等, 仍然是主要的治疗手段, 并构成了临床治疗指南的基础^[2, 3]。但是, 这些传统方法的应用存在着多种障碍和限制。例如, 长期输血会引起过敏、溶血、同种免疫反应和感染反应等危害^[4]; 脾切除手术只适用于5岁以上患者, 且术后可能导致高凝血风险增加和感染风险上升等^[5]; 羟基脲对粒细胞系统影响较大, 有骨髓抑制、胃肠道反应和全身反应等副作用^[6]; 终身螯合铁治疗会导致严重的并发症, 如胃肠道症状、关节痛、粒细胞缺乏症和中性粒细胞减少症等, 进而影响患者的总体存活率^[7]。

近年来, 随着对 β -地中海贫血病理生理过程的深入研究, 人们对该疾病发病机制的认识取得了新的进展^[8, 9]。研究表明, α/β -珠蛋白链比例失衡导致了无效红细胞生成 (ineffective erythropoiesis, IE)、慢性溶血性贫血和代偿性造血增生^[10]。在其机制方面, 研究显示这一失衡会导致游离的 α -珠蛋白链沉淀, 产生活性氧 (reactive oxygen species, ROS), 引发红系前体细胞在多色阶段死亡, 导致红细胞寿命缩短^[11, 12]; 同时使骨髓和髓外未成熟的红细胞池扩大, 最终导致 IE^[13]。而 IE 可进一步引起慢性溶血性贫血和代偿性造血增生。

IE 具有遗传异质性, 因此多数重症 β -地中海贫血患者需要从幼儿时期就开始输血。由于长期贫血, 十二指肠对铁的吸收增加, 导致患者出现铁过载 (主要在肝脏)。而最严重的并发症是心脏铁过载^[14, 15]。已知铁过载的发生和发展受铁调素-铁转运蛋白轴的调节^[16]。尽管存在铁过载, 但 β -地中海贫血患者体内铁调素水平降低^[17, 18]。研究结果显示, IE、铁调素水平下降和铁吸收增加共同导致了 β -地中海贫血患者的铁过载^[19, 20]。

根据上述病理生理学研究的结果, 临床上近年来采用了一些新的方法来治疗 β -地中海贫血患者 (表 1)。这些方法主要可分为三大类: 改善 IE、纠正珠蛋白链失衡和减轻铁过载^[21]。本综述将详细介绍这三类方法的研究进展。

1 改善IE

在 β -地中海贫血中, 红系祖细胞的凋亡是导致贫血的主要原因; 它会减少红细胞的寿命并降低其携氧功能。肾脏通过分泌促红细胞生成素 (erythropoietin, EPO) 来应对机体缺氧。在低氧应激和 EPO 的刺激下, 红系前体细胞产生 IE^[22]。IE 通过导致肝脾肿大和增加铁吸收等途径进一步加重患者的病情。目前, 治疗 IE 的药物主要包括活化素受体 II (activin receptor type II, Act RII) 陷阱配体、Janus 激酶 2 (Janus kinase 2, JAK2) 抑制剂、丙酮酸激酶 (pyruvate kinase, PK) 活化剂和甘氨酸转运蛋白 1 (glycine transporter 1, GlyT1) 抑制剂等。

1.1 Act RII陷阱配体

生长分化因子 11 (growth differentiation factor 11, GDF11)、Act RIIA/Act RIIIB、转化生长因子 (transforming growth factor, TGF) 家族受体等在 β -地中海贫血患者脾脏的未成熟红细胞中过度表达。这种特异的组织活化会增加未成熟红细胞的数量和机体的氧化应激压力, 从而阻碍终末红细胞分化, 并促进疾病的进展^[23]。TGF- β 已经被证明在晚期红细胞生成中具有抑制作用^[24-27]。Act RIIA 和 Act RIIIB 能够识别多种配体 (包括 GDF11 和 TGF- β), 通过激活 SMAD2/3 信号通路来调节基因表达, 参与多种生理活动 / 功能, 如骨稳态和与年龄相关的骨丧失等^[28, 29] (图 1)。Act RIIA 和 Act RIIIB 的陷阱配体分别为 ACE-011 (Sotatercept) 和 RAP-536 (Luspatercept)^[30]。它们通过抑制 SMAD2/3 信号通路来改善贫血, 特别是以 IE 为特征的贫血, 如 β -地中海贫血和骨髓增生异常性肿瘤 (myelodysplastic neoplasma, MDS) 伴发的贫血^[31]。下文将综述 ACE-011 (Sotatercept) 和 RAP-536 (Luspatercept) 用于治疗 β -地中海贫血的研究进展。

1.1.1 应用Sotatercept的治疗

Sotatercept 作为一种配体陷阱, 通过抑制 TGF- β 超家族中的晚期红细胞生成负调控因子来纠正 IE。在 2012 年 11 月至 2014 年 11 月期间, 全球 7 个研究中心进行了一项 2 期临床试验, 涉及 16 名输血依赖型地中海贫血 (transfusion-dependent thalassemia, TDT) 患者和 30 名非输血依赖型地中海贫血 (non-transfusion-dependent thalassemia, NTD) 患者。其中, TDT 患者的中位治疗时间为 13.8 个月, NTD 患者的为 19.6 个月。患者每 3 周接受一次 Sotatercept 皮下注射, 治疗剂量分别为 0.1、0.3、0.5、

表1. β -地中海贫血治疗方法临床试验统计
Table 1. Clinical trial statistics of treatment methods for β -thalassemia

Registered number	Drugs/therapy	Route of medication	Targets	Development phase	Actual patients
NCT01571635	Sotatercept	Subcutaneous injection	ACVR2; GDF11	Phase 2	46
NCT02604433/ NCT05567458	Luspatercept*	Subcutaneous injection	GDF; TGFB; TGFBR	Phase 3	336/90
NCT02049450	Ruxolitinib	Oral administration	JAK2	Phase 2	30
NCT03692052	Mitapivat sulfate*	Oral administration	PK	Phase 2	20
NCT04987489	Etavopivat	Oral administration	PK	Phase 2	60
NCT03207009/ CT02906202/ NCT01745120/ NCT02151526	LentiGlobin*	Intravenous injection	Hbb	Phase 3	18/23/19/7
NCT05477563/ NCT04208529	CTX-001	Intravenous injection	BCL11A	Phase 3	12/114
NCT04364269	Vamifeport hydrochloride	Oral administration	SLC40A1	Phase 2b	25
NCT04059406	Sapablursen	Subcutaneous injection	TMPRSS6	Phase 2	29
NCT05752123/ NCT04390971/ NCT04925206	ET-01	Intravenous injection	BCL11A	Phase 1	3/3/8
NCT05577312	BRL-101	Intravenous injection	Hemoglobin	Phase 1	9
NCT05442346	Autologous stem cell therapy	Intravenous injection	-	Phase 1/2	5
NCT03993613	Apotransferrin	Intravenous injection	TF	Phase 2	10
NCT04054921/ NCT03802201	Rusfertide	Subcutaneous injection	HAMP	Phase 2	34/63
NCT04411082	Tovinontrine	Oral administration	CAM	Phase 2	122
NCT04432623	Benserazide	Oral administration	Hemoglobin	Phase 1/2	36

Data from ClinicalTrials.gov, updated to May 28, 2023. *, Approved for sale. -, not available. HAMP, hepcidin antimicrobial peptide; Hbb, hemoglobin subunit β ; TMPRSS6, transmembrane protease serine 6; GDF, glycodelin-F; TGFBR, TGF β receptor; JAK2, Janus kinase 2; PK, protein kinase; SLC40A1, solute carrier family 40 member 1; BCL11A, B-cell lymphoma/leukemia 11A; CAM, calodulin 1; TF, transferrin.

0.75 和 1.0 mg/kg。在 TDT 组中,有 10 名患者 (62.5%) 的输血总量减少了 20%, 并保持了 24 周以上; 7 名患者 (43.8%) 的输血总量减少了 33%; 2 名患者 (12.5%) 的输血总量减少了 50%; 该组 Sotatercept 的有效剂量需大于 0.5 mg/kg。在 NTDT 组中, Sotatercept 的有效剂量为 0.1~1.0 mg/kg, 有 18 名患者 (60%) 平均血红蛋白的增加幅度超过 1.0 g/dL, 11 名患者 (36.7%) 平均血红蛋白的增加幅度超过 1.5 g/dL (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT01571635>)^[32]。总体而言, Sotatercept 表现出了良好的生物安全性, 大多数患者都能够耐受。

1.1.2 应用 Luspatercept (通用名: 罗特西普) 的治疗

Luspatercept 也是一种被视为活化素抑制剂的重组融合蛋白。Luspatercept 和 EPO 可共同促使红细

胞生成并产生协同效应^[33]。体内和体外研究表明, GDF11 可抑制小鼠红细胞的发育^[34]。GDF11 和 ActRIIB 在红系前体细胞中的表达随着细胞分化的进行而下降^[35], 提示 GDF11 在红细胞晚期分化中发挥作用。在 MDS 小鼠模型中, Luspatercept 能够降低 Smad2/3 活性、改善贫血、减少红细胞增生和提高红细胞生成效率^[36], 提示使用 Luspatercept 可能是治疗贫血的一种新方法, 特别是针对由 IE 引起的贫血。目前, Luspatercept 已在许多临床试验中得到了应用 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02604433>, <https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05567458>); 在地中海贫血患者中, 尤其是 NTDT 患者中, 产生了明显的缓解疗效, 并显著降低了输血需求^[37]。另外, Luspatercept 表现出了

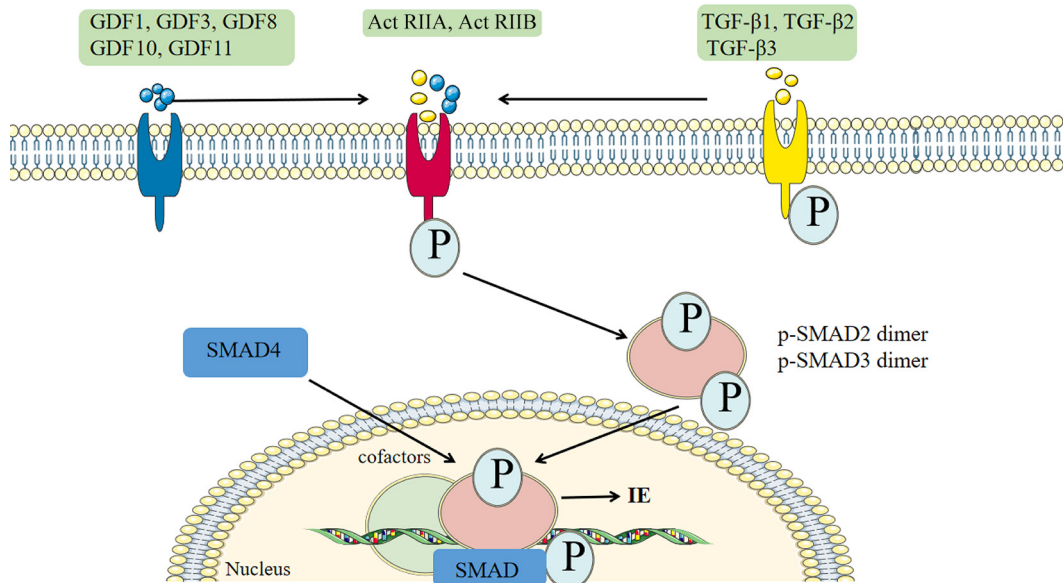


图 1. SMAD2/3信号通路示意图

Fig. 1. Diagram of SMAD2/3 signaling pathway. Growth differentiation factor 11 (GDF11), activin receptor type II A (Act RIIA) and B (Act RIIIB), and transforming growth factor (TGF) family receptors are over-expressed in immature erythrocytes of β -thalassemia spleens. Act RIIA and Act RIIIB are recognized by a variety of ligands, including GDF11 and TGF- β , and regulate gene expression by activating SMAD2/3, which in β -thalassemia leads to the production of ineffective erythropoiesis (IE).

良好的耐受性, 可使健康受试者的血红蛋白水平呈剂量依赖性增加^[38]。最近, Luspatercept 被美国食品药品监督管理局 (Food and Drug Administration, FDA) 批准用于治疗 TDT 患者, 建议的起始剂量为 1 mg/kg, 每 3 周皮下注射 1 次 (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/resources-information-approved-drugs/fda-approves-luspatercept-aamt-anemia-patients-beta-thalassemia>)。

1.2 JAK2抑制剂的的应用

在 β -地中海贫血患者中, 高 EPO 水平与 JAK2/STAT5 (signal transducer and activator of transcription 5) 通路的激活以及红系祖细胞数量的增加密切相关, 这一现象在脾脏中尤为明显^[39]。EPO 与其受体之间的相互作用可使 JAK2 加速发生磷酸化, 从而刺激红细胞的生成 (图 2)^[40]。目前的研究表明, JAK2 可能是治疗 IE 的潜在治疗靶点。

在 TDT 和 NTDT 小鼠模型中, 抑制 JAK2 不仅可以改善 IE, 还可以逆转脾脏肿大^[41, 42]。研究表明, 使用 Ruxolitinib (一种 JAK2 抑制剂) 可能对 β -地中海贫血患者有益, 例如, 一项临床试验 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02049450>) 研究了 Ruxolitinib 治疗伴有脾脏肿大的 TDT 患者的疗效和安全性^[43]。该研究共有 30 名 TDT 患者接受

了 Ruxolitinib 治疗, 初始剂量为 10 mg/次, 每日两次, 研究结果显示, 治疗后患者的脾脏明显减小。然而, 该研究发现 Ruxolitinib 治疗并没有明显提升患者的血红蛋白水平, 因此也没有减少相应的输血需求。另外, 该研究还发现 Ruxolitinib 治疗组的铁调素水平升高, 但随着时间的推移, 血清铁或铁蛋白水平并没有发生明显的变化。因此, 该临床试验没有进入到第三阶段。

1.3 PK活化剂的应用

在遗传性非球形细胞贫血中, 糖酵解酶异常引起 PK 不足是最常见的原因。PK 不足直接导致患者 ATP 减少, 使红细胞形态发生不规则变化, 在网状内皮系统的微循环中被消除, 导致血管外溶血^[44]。目前, 相关的研究重点关注了 PK 缺陷引起的病理生理学变化, 发现 PK 缺陷小鼠的代谢紊乱会改变红细胞的耐力和红系祖细胞的成熟, 导致 IE^[45]。有文献还指出, β -地中海贫血患者因 ATP 供应不足, 红细胞难以维持细胞膜的适应度和 α -珠蛋白沉积的清除^[46]。

另外, 研究显示 Mitapivat (AG-348, 一种 PK 活化剂) 能够提高 ATP 水平、减轻 IE、改善贫血、提高红细胞存活率和降低铁过载指数等^[47-50]。例如,

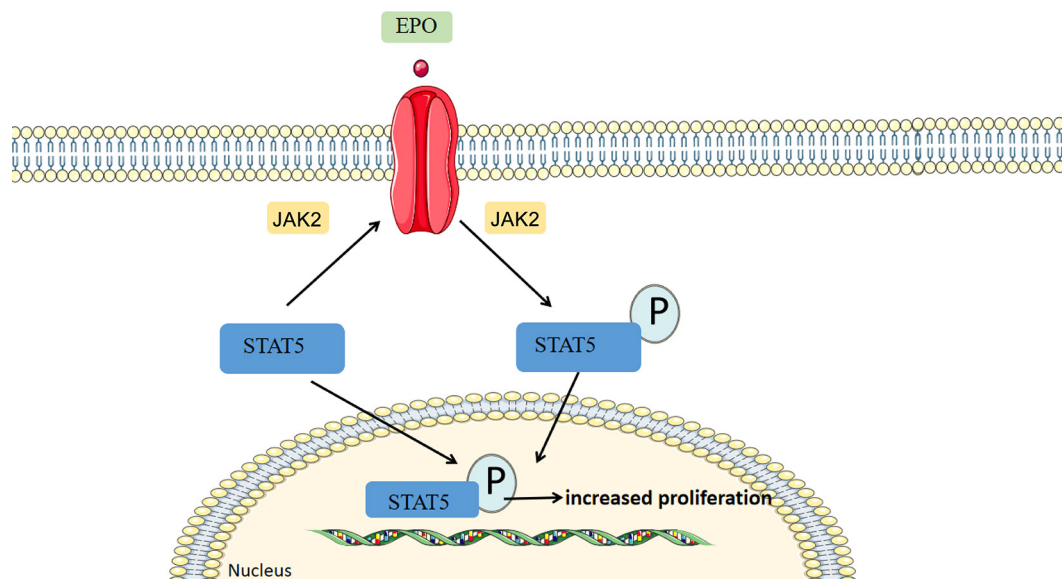


图 2. Janus kinase 2 (JAK2)信号通路示意图

Fig. 2. Diagram of Janus kinase 2 (JAK2) signaling pathway. High erythropoietin (EPO) levels in β -thalassemia in response to anemia and hypoxia are associated with activation of the JAK2/STAT5 pathway and an increase in the number of erythroid progenitors. The interaction between EPO and its receptor drives accelerated phosphorylation of JAK2, which stimulates erythropoiesis.

一项早期临床试验结果表明, 在 20 名患者中, 使用 AG-348 可使血红蛋白增加超过 1.0 g/dL; 并使输血需求显著减少 (每季度输注红细胞至少减少了 2 个单位)^[51]。另一项临床试验也发现 AG-348 是一种疗效高、选择性强、口服生物利用度高的 PK 小分子激活剂, 该临床试验结果支持将 AG-348 用于治疗 α -地中海贫血和 β -地中海贫血 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04987489>)。AG-348 目前已被 FDA 批准用于治疗 TDT 患者。

1.4 GlyT1抑制剂的应用

GlyT1 在红系发育中具有重要作用。甘氨酸主要通过 GlyT1 吸收, 这一系统是红细胞生成的主要推动力^[52-54]。缺乏 GlyT1 的小鼠容易出现小细胞低色素性贫血^[55]。Matte 等在 β -地中海贫血小鼠模型 (Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠) 中发现, 口服 Bitopertin (GlyT1 抑制剂) 能够改善贫血、减轻溶血、减少 IE 和促进红细胞存活^[52]。Bitopertin 还能够减轻红细胞氧化损伤相关的指标, 如膜相关的游离血红蛋白链聚集物含量、ROS 含量、膜结合血红素含量和血液调节抑制物的活性等^[52]。

2 纠正血红蛋白链的不平衡

在 β -地中海贫血中, β -珠蛋白合成减少会导

致未结合的 α -珠蛋白过多; 这些 α -珠蛋白无法形成血红蛋白四聚体, 并在骨髓及其红细胞前体及外周血中沉淀。这就会导致红细胞前体出现缺陷, 并引起 IE。继发性的贫血进一步引起红细胞生成, 导致骨髓增生。因此, 纠正珠蛋白链的不平衡可能是 β -地中海贫血治疗的方向。目前该方向主要包括传统的骨髓移植术和基因编辑等新兴技术。

2.1 骨髓移植术

TDT 患者进行骨髓移植的基本作用是恢复相关组织产生功能性血红蛋白的能力。在欧洲, 1983 到 2018 年间 137 例重度地中海贫血移植患者的移植登记显示, 其中位年龄为 10.1 岁。在平均 30 年的随访中, 患者的总体存活率为 83.2%; 治愈率达到了 78.8%; 地中海贫血的累积发生率为 10.2%; 累积生存率为 81.4%; 无病生存率为 74.5%^[56]。在土耳其, 全国性数据报告显示, 进行造血干细胞移植的重型地中海贫血患者中移植物抗宿主发生率为 8.3%; 5 年的总体生存率为 92.3%, 无地中海贫血生存率为 82.1%。7 岁以下的患儿若能进行移植, 其上述数据表现更好, 故而建议有匹配供体的患儿尽可能在 7 岁之前通过骨髓移植来改善预后^[57]。然而, 合适供体的可用性、患者的适应性和手术相关的毒性是应用造血干细胞移植的主要限制因素。因此, 很

有必要研究新的预处理方案。

2.2 基因编辑技术

借助基因编辑技术修复和替换造血干细胞中的基因缺陷来治疗 β -地中海贫血已成为一种新的治疗方法。该疗法的要点是在分离造血干细胞后,将外源性 β -珠蛋白基因通过逆转录病毒或慢病毒载体(包含整个调控机制)整合到宿主细胞的基因组中。这些经过基因工程处理的自体造血干细胞在患者完全或部分骨髓消融后返回患者体内,重新聚集在造血子系统中并可以替代 β -地中海贫血患者的长期输血^[58,59]。

目前有涉及 22 名 TDT 患者的两个临床试验 [HGB-204 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT01745120>) 和 HGB-205 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02151526>)] 采用了该技术。其中一组包括 13 例非 β^0/β^0 基因型患者,有 12 例血红蛋白水平稳定 (8.2~13.7 g/dL),不再需要输血;另外一组有 9 例 β^0/β^0 基因型患者每年所需输血减少了 73%,其中有 3 例停止输血^[60,61]。该方法最新的临床试验 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03207009>, <https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT-05752123>) 正在进行中^[62]。另外,蓝鸟公司的 β -地中海贫血基因疗法 Zynteglo 于 2022 年 8 月 17 日获 FDA 批准,用于 β -地中海贫血的治疗 (<https://www.fda.gov/media/160994/download>)。然而,以慢病毒为基础的基因和细胞治疗产品效果虽然显著,但是由于价格昂贵(每名患者花费 50~100 万美元),所以推广受到了限制^[63]。

2.3 转录因子编辑技术

另一种新兴的方法是通过基因编辑突变转录因子如 B-细胞淋巴瘤因子 11A (B-cell CLL/Lymphoma 11A, BCL11A) 增加 γ -血红蛋白的产生,达到纠正珠蛋白链不平衡的目的^[64-68]。目前有几种基因组编辑方法,包括 CRISPR-Cas9、转录激活剂样效应核酸酶和锌指核酸酶,正在用于编辑 BCL11A^[69-71]。上海邦耀生物科技有限公司已经在国内首次尝试使用这种方法治疗 β -地中海贫血。而这一方法的最新临床试验仍在进行中 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05442346>, <https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05577312>)。美国福泰制药的临床试验 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT05477563>) 结果表明,通过对 BCL11A 的红系增强子基因的编辑,可上调胎儿血红蛋白的表达。

该公司的另一项临床试验 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04208529>) 将分析这种治疗方法的长期风险和益处,以及评估其治疗效果^[72]。综上,这些转录因子编辑技术为改善珠蛋白链平衡提供了一种有前景的方法。

2.4 靶向 α -珠蛋白基因的表达

β -地中海贫血的分子病理变化是 β -珠蛋白基因发生突变,导致 β -珠蛋白链的合成不足或完全不能合成,最终造成 α -珠蛋白链的相对过剩。多余的 α -珠蛋白链在红细胞内容易形成包涵体,造成红细胞膜的氧化损伤,导致红细胞前体和成熟红细胞发生 IE 和溶血。

目前,虽然 β -地中海贫血的基因治疗大多停留在 β -珠蛋白的基因工程上,但有部分研究认为 α -珠蛋白的表达也是珠蛋白链失衡矫正的一个靶点^[73,74]。适度下调内源性 α -珠蛋白的基因表达来减少 α -珠蛋白肽链合成,可能比直接增加 β -珠蛋白肽链生成更有助于改善 β -地中海贫血患者症状^[75]。有研究表明, α -珠蛋白表达降低 25%~75% 是可以耐受的^[76]。因此,靶向 α -珠蛋白基因表达的策略为 β -地中海贫血的治疗开创了新思路。

3 降低铁过载

β -地中海贫血的严重后果是铁过载^[77]。有研究结果显示,通过限制铁的过度积累来减少转铁蛋白 (transferrin, Tf) 对 β -地中海贫血患者是有益的^[78]。 β -地中海贫血的特征是铁调素水平异常低和全身铁过剩。铁调素是铁代谢的主要调节因子,同时也是一种通过激活 Tf 的分解来控制铁代谢的肽。它的活性与铁过载有关。大量刺激铁调素表达或活性的药物已经在临床前试验中进行了研究,并显示出其有益的活性,如改善中间型 β -地中海贫血患者的铁超载和贫血,减少重型 β -地中海贫血患者的输血需求等^[79,80]。

3.1 Tf活性的抑制

游离铁可以参与危险的氧化过程,因此使用 Tf 抑制剂调节铁代谢并靶向 IE 是治疗 β -地中海贫血的一种新思路。近期发现了一种口服小分子 Tf 抑制剂,名为 viti-2763,它在细胞中能阻止铁的流动,并与铁调素竞争结合 Tf,导致 Tf 的内化和泛素化^[81]。Manolova 等在 β -地中海贫血的模型鼠 (Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠) 中也证实了 viti-2763 可以改善贫血和促进红细胞生成,同时降低 ROS 水平,增加了组织的总体氧合,

从而抑制了缺氧循环, 减少了 EPO 的产生, 并减少了肝脏中的铁过载^[82]。他们还发现, viti-2763 显著改善 Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠骨髓和脾脏的红系生成; 此外, viti-2763 在该动物实验中表现出了良好的耐受性, 并且未观察到与毒性相关的不良反应^[82]。

目前, 为了进一步确定 viti-2763 的安全性、耐受性、药代动力学特性和药效学效应, 正在进行一项 1 期临床试验 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04364269>)。该研究纳入了年龄在 18~65 岁的健康男性和女性志愿者, 结果显示没有导致停药的不良事件或严重不良事件; 在单次给药时, viti-2763 在剂量达到或超过 60 mg 时会导致平均血清铁水平的暂时下降; Tf 饱和度 (仅在多次给药后评估) 也暂时下降^[83]。后续还将启动针对该药的 2 期临床研究。除此之外, 另一项针对 Tf 的临床试验也正在进行中 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03993613>)。

3.2 抑制铁调素活性

铁调素是一种由 25 个氨基酸残基组成的肽类激素, 主要在肝细胞产生, 由 *HAMP* (Hepcidin antimicrobial peptide) 基因编码。*HAMP* 基因编码铁调素的前体蛋白, 然后切割产生具有活性的铁调素。铁调素可通过铁的吸收和再循环适应来控制铁进入红细胞^[84, 85]。铁缺乏、红细胞扩增、贫血、缺氧、睾酮作用等因素均可抑制铁调素的表达^[86]。目前, *HAMP* 模拟物 rusfertide 治疗 β -地中海贫血的临床试验正在进行中 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04054921>, <https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03802201>)。

跨膜蛋白酶丝氨酸 6 (transmembrane protease serine 6, *TMPRSS6*) 是针对铁调素的另一热点药物。沉默 *TMPRSS6* 基因的寡核苷酸具有诱导铁调素表达的药理潜力^[87]。有研究表明, 适度过表达铁调素能降低 Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠血液、肝脏、脾脏和肾脏的铁水平, 并改善 IE、红细胞存活率和红细胞形态^[88]。在 Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠中, *TMPRSS6* 基因的缺失已被证明可以改善贫血、红细胞生成功能低下和脾肿大^[89]。研究显示, 通过第二代反义寡核苷酸 (antisense oligonucleotides, ASOs) 靶向 *TMPRSS6* 在 Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠的表达来调节 *HAMP*, 对治疗 β -地中海贫血有益, 如降低血清铁、Tf 饱和度和肝脏铁积累, 并改善贫血^[90]。另一项研究显示, 使用脂质纳米颗粒 *Tmprss6* siRNA 处理 Hbb^{th3/+} 小鼠, 可以下调 *TMPRSS6* 的表

达并诱导铁调素的表达, 进而降低组织和血清铁水平^[91]。近期开展的一项临床研究将 *TMPRSS6* 抑制剂用于年龄大于 18 岁的 NTDT 患者 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04059406>)。

4 总结与展望

本文综述了近年来在治疗 β -地中海贫血领域出现的新策略, 这些新策略为 β -地中海贫血的治疗和管理提供了新的思路 and 选择。随着改善 IE 的药物开始进入临床, 传统治疗方法无法耐受的患者有了新的可供选择的药物。但是, 在这种情况下, 制定新药的临床应用指南时应加入更多的临床病例的观测和评估结果。纵观相关的治疗方法, 可以看出, 一次性的基因治疗虽然可能消除终身治疗的需要, 但其成本高昂且长期效果仍需要观测和评估。对于无法进行造血干细胞移植的输血依赖型成人 β -地中海贫血患者, 终身输血及祛铁治疗是最主要的治疗方式; 目前临床上祛铁药仍然以传统的祛铁剂为主。此外, 还有其他一些治疗方法, 如 IMR-687 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT-04411082>)^[92] 和 苜丝肼 (<https://classic.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04432623>) 等也正在临床试验中。然而, 这些新疗法的单独使用或与传统治疗剂 (如铁螯合剂) 联合使用的有效性, 还需要更多的实验数据加以证实。

总的来说, 地中海贫血的治疗仍然面临挑战, 但随着相关科研资金投入的增加以及研究的不断深入, 新的治疗方法和手段将继续涌现, 治愈地中海贫血的前景仍然充满希望。

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